

Inspection of St Augustine's CofE School

Hanson Lane, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX1 5PG

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Ruth Lee. This school is part of the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Elaine Watson, and overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Baljit Birring and Tehmina Hashmi.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this warm, caring school that is a place of sanctuary for the community it serves. Pupils are respectful towards school staff and each other. They feel safe because they have excellent relationships with staff. Pupils arrive in the morning confident that they will enjoy their day of learning. One pupil, echoing the views of many, described the school as 'a beacon of hope'.

The school has high ambitions for pupils' achievement. The curriculum provides interest and challenge. Pupils learn with enthusiasm and build their knowledge over time. Some pupils join the school following gaps in their education. These pupils build effectively on their starting points. They glow with pride when they talk about their work.

Children get off to an effective start in the early years, where they enjoy and benefit from well-considered days of learning and discovery.

There is a calm sense of purpose all around the school. Pupils are confident and independent. Their behaviour is positive, both in and out of lessons. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their leadership roles and their contribution to the life of the school. Pupils know that they are all equal and are clear that it is okay to be different in this school, and they value diversity.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

School leaders and governors, in partnership with the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust, have ensured rapid and sustained improvement since the school became an academy. This is because they have focused sharply on improving the curriculum, teaching and outcomes for all pupils.

Curriculum-thinking is well considered and precise. It meets the specific needs of the pupils served by the school. Teachers use the curriculum effectively so that learning flows from Reception to Year 6. Pupils revisit essential prior learning to help them recall key knowledge. They talk confidently about their learning and can remember important facts. For example, in mathematics, pupils talk about learning to add fractions, then link decimals, fractions and percentages to find fractions of an amount.

Many pupils arrive at the school with gaps in their learning. Staff are adept at addressing them. However, outcomes for pupils that arrive in the later stages of key stage 2 remain low due to significant gaps that many of these pupils have built prior to joining the school. In addition, in mathematics, some of the activities that pupils attempt do not encourage them to reason and problem-solve when they are ready. This impacts on how well pupils apply their learning to more complex problems and hinders their achievement.

Reading is now a strength of the school. A rigorous approach to teaching phonics ensures that pupils remember the sounds that they learn. Staff are well trained. Pupils confidently read books matched to the sounds that they are learning and practise writing the sounds and words that they know. Where needed, pupils who need extra support receive this so

that they can keep up with the phonics programme. Older pupils read increasingly complex texts and show developing fluency, expression and comprehension.

The school precisely identifies and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work hard to ensure that they reduce barriers to learning so that pupils with SEND achieve well. Individual targets for pupils with SEND are clearly recorded and known by staff. Adaptations in lessons mean that learning is successful.

In the early years, staff consider learning activities in detail so that children learn effectively. There is a sharp focus on personal and social education and communication and language. This means that children in the reception year are ready for key stage 1. However, continuous provision activities do not effectively develop and secure the essential vocabulary that many pupils at the very early stages of language development need.

Pupils manage their behaviour well and take pride in the presentation of their work. They say that bullying never happens. The school works hard to promote good levels of attendance, which is improving. However, too many pupils still miss too much school. This means that gaps occur in what they know and can do, and their learning slows down.

Personal development and the care of all pupils and their families is at the heart of the school. Pupils have a mature understanding of how to be safe, including online. They have a strong knowledge of different faiths and cultures. They model tolerance and respect. Older pupils talk with understanding about protected characteristics. They can discuss ideas such as democracy with confidence. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities through after-school clubs. They take responsibility and are motivated to contribute to the community beyond the school. The school ensures that pupils are prepared for life in a modern, diverse Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The number of pupils who are persistently absent remains high. These pupils are unable to fully access school life and lose out on learning. The school and trust should further accelerate their work to improve attendance, working with outside agencies to engage parents where necessary to support these pupils to participate in school much more regularly and catch up with their learning.
- At times, the activities that pupils complete do not consistently encourage them to use their knowledge in reasoning and problem solving. This means that some pupils do not become adept at applying what they know to increasingly challenging mathematical

problems. The school and trust should develop the curriculum to build up pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills over time so that they can apply this learning to more complex questions with success.

- In the early years, learning opportunities in the continuous provision are not sufficiently focused on developing and securing the essential vocabulary that many pupils at the very early stages of language development need. This means that language development is not as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that the curriculum in the early years explicitly outlines the important vocabulary that children need to learn and understand at each stage, so that activities in the continuous provision successfully support language acquisition for all children.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	149211
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10379427
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Baljit Birring and Tehmina Hashmi (co-chairs)
CEO of the trust	Elaine Watson
Headteacher	Ruth Lee
Website	www.st-augustines.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust on 1 September 2022.
- This is a Church of England Primary School. The school's first section 48 inspection is due this academic year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has been recognised as a School of Sanctuary.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the Headteacher and other staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board, the board of trustees, the CEO and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors met with the following: the leader for behaviour and attendance; the leader for personal, social and health education; and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders for art, science and history, looked at curriculum documents in these subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also looked at pupils' work in English.
- Inspectors met with the leader for the early years and carried out visits to Reception class lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around school and at playtime and lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils, and Ofsted Parent View. These included comments received via the free-text facility. Inspectors also talked to some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Chris Jennings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Greaves

Ofsted Inspector

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